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THIS WATERGATE SWINGS BOTH WAYS

by Assassination Information Bureau

We have discovered an indirect but important link between some of the Watergate burglars and an individual who came to the attention of the Warren Commission because of his association with Jack Ruby in some schemes related to Cuba. The central figure in this story is Robert Ray McKeown, who at the time in question lived in Houston, Texas.

McKeown told the FBI in January, 1964 that a man named Rubinstein (Ruby's original name) had telephoned him in January, 1959, about a week after Castro took power in Cuba. The caller was attempting to gain the release of three people being held under arrest by the new Cuban government. "Rubinstein" offered McKeown \$15,000 for his assistance, and he remarked that the money would be paid by unnamed persons in Las Vegas. "Rubinstein" never called back about this request, but a few weeks later a man whom McKeown identified as Ruby showed up in Houston to talk to McKeown in person. This time, for \$25,000, he wanted McKeown to write a letter of introduction to Fidel Castro (for Ruby). Again, according to McKeown, there was no follow-up and no action was taken.

Ruby had certainly come to the right man for the jobs he needed done. McKeown was a personal friend of Fidel Castro. When Castro visited the U.S. in April, 1959, during the period when U.S.-Cuban relations were still quite friendly, the Cuban leader stopped off in Houston to pay his respects to McKeown. Castro was quoted as saying that McKeown would always be welcome in Cuba and, if he wished, could have a government job or a valuable concession.

What had McKeown done to deserve such treatment by Castro? For years, McKeown had been a supplier of illegal weapons and equipment to Castro's guerilla army in the mountains fighting to overthrow Batista. There were many Americans who fought on Castro's side (for example, Frank Sturgis and Jack Youngblood, under suspicion in the Martin Luther King case) and they had various motives. McKeown's true interests may still not be known, but it is clear that his political allegiance was not to Castro but to Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras, a former Cuban President living in exile in Florida since 1952, who, it has often been alleged, has secretly been one of Castro's biggest financial backers.

The most interesting document about McKeown is Warren Commission



This photo, one of a series taken by news photographer Jim Murray after the assassination in Dallas, shows an unidentified man picking something off the infield grass of Dealey Plaza near the spot where Kennedy was shot. Deputy Sheriff Buddy Walthers and a Dallas policeman look on. In a July 22, 1964 memorandum, Warren Commission lawyer Norman Redlick suggested that Walthers be asked "exactly what he saw on the day of the assassination with reference to the bullet he claims splattered on the edge of the curb on Main St." Both the FBI and Dallas police deny that a bullet was found anywhere on the scene of the shooting, and Walthers later backed away from the story. The incident remains a source of speculation that evidence of bullets inconsistent with Oswald's rifle was covered up.

Exhibit 3066. This is an FBI report on a 1958 arms smuggling case in which McKeown was convicted and sentenced to six months in prison and fined \$500. The FBI says that this arrest was the culmination of an investigation of the activities of Dr. Prio and his associates which had been going on since 1952. The FBI report goes on to list the names of those individuals who were charged with McKeown, including Prio himself as well as McKeown's wife.

When we looked at the identities of these individuals we find links with Watergate burglar Bernard Barker.

One of McKeown's co-defendants was "Abelardo Pujol Barrera, aka Joe Sanco, Jose Saucó, Jose Alonzo, age 42, male, resident of Miami, Florida, citizen of Cuba." This man is identical with Alonso Pujol, vice-president of Cuba during Prio's regime, who reportedly now lives in Caracas, Venezuela. According to

Horace Sutton ("The Curious Intrigues of Cuban Miami," *Saturday Review*, Sept. 11, 1973), two of Alonso Pujol's sons are linked to Barker. One son, Guillermo Alonso Pujol y Bermudez is a business associate of Barker. The other son, Jorge Alonso Pujol y Bermudez, was a Bay of Pigs veteran, ransomed from Castro's prisons by his father for a reported \$100,000, the first and only prisoner to be released before December, 1962. Jorge Alonso was arrested in Miami in 1970 in a narcotics sweep but was later released on probation. His attorney was Miquel Suarez, a prominent lawyer active in Florida Republican politics, who was head of Sen. Gurney's election committee in 1970.

Suarez has long been known to Watergate researchers as a close associate of Barker's. He represented the real estate company Barker ran in 1972; he has been Barker's business partner for a number of years. He was president of the Ameritas Corp., in whose name reservations for the Watergate burglars were made at the Watergate Hotel. When Suarez first heard about the break-in and the use of Ameritas letterheads by the burglars he claimed the letterhead was stolen.

The initial link in this chain—Robert McKeown—is of particular current interest because of his statements on last fall's CBS assassination special. In a very suspicious account, McKeown related to Dan Rather how he had been approached by two men seeking to purchase guns and identified one as Lee Harvey Oswald.

There are several reasons to be wary of this tale. Not only did McKeown wait 12 years before recounting this incident—suggesting some self-serving motive—but McKeown refers to the man who identified himself as Oswald as "this little guy, the small blond-headed fellow" (emphasis added). CBS only added further confusion and misinformation to the issue in even suggesting that there was some truth to this blatantly false account.

Signet has just published *Government by Gunplay*, edited by AIB member Harvey Yazjian, a survey of basic arguments for conspiracy in the JFK, MLK, RFK and Wallace shootings, plus vital background articles on Watergate and organized crime. Contributors include AIB member Carl Oglesby, Phillip Agee, Fletcher Prouty, Peter Dale Scott, and Allard Lowenstein. "Sexy!" T. Capote; "Marvelous reading..." B. Buckley; "I didn't know that!" G. Ford; "Now you tell me..." Everett Dirksen. ■